

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES - DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

**5.1 PARAMETERS FOR THE USE OF PSYCHODYNAMIC
PSYCHOTHERAPY TECHNIQUES**

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I. DEFINITIONS

- A. Dynamic therapies encompass a broad range of techniques originally derived from psychoanalytic theory.
- B. Dynamic therapies share a core set of concepts and techniques and focus on changing individuals' intrapersonal or psychological states and interpersonal relationships theorized as underlying specific disorders or symptoms.
- C. Specialized training is required to develop the skills necessary to practice psychodynamic therapy.
- D. Psychodynamic techniques may be usefully employed as a component of other therapies.

II. PSYCHODYNAMIC TECHNIQUES

A. Components

Psychodynamic techniques include the:

- 1. Identification, interpretation, and (where adaptive) integration of drives, motivations, and affects;
- 2. Identification, interpretation and resolution of internal and external conflicts;
- 3. Identification and interpretation of psychological defenses and resistance; and
- 4. Expression and integration (where appropriate) of affect, impulses, conflicts and defenses.

B. Therapist's Role

- 1. Specific therapist behaviors include:
 - a. Timely interpretations and clarifications,

- b. Therapeutic use of “transference” relationship,
 - c. Promoting the development of insight,
 - d. Permitting individual to “work through” problematic behavior,
 - e. Providing a corrective emotional experience,
 - f. Promoting autonomy and effective coping, and
 - g. Promoting development of empathy, healthy attachment, and responsibility.
2. The therapist focuses on inner feelings and past experiences relevant to psychodynamic theory.

II. PARAMETERS FOR USE DYNAMIC TECHNIQUES

A. Selection of Technique

1. Selection and use of Dynamic techniques are informed by knowledge of the individual’s:
 - a. Diagnosis,
 - b. Symptoms,
 - c. Functional level,
 - d. Environmental support, and
 - e. Linguistic and cultural background.
2. Specific assessments for selection of Dynamic techniques should be informed by the individual’s level of:
 1. Motivation,
 2. Verbal ability.
 3. Impairment due to symptoms, and
 4. Ego strength

B. Essential Use

1. Selected Dynamic techniques are a part of Psychotherapeutic intervention for individuals with personality disorders.
2. Selected Dynamic techniques are a part of psychotherapeutic intervention for treatment of Dissociative Disorders.

C. Optional Use

Selected Dynamic techniques may be a necessary part of psychotherapeutic interventions for treatment of individuals with a wide range of diagnoses that meet selection criteria.

D. Frequency

Dynamic techniques must occur at sufficient frequency and for sufficient duration to ensure clinical results.

E. Necessary Resources	Environments conducive to sense of privacy, comfort and safety.
F. Therapist Training	All therapists must have a working knowledge of psychodynamic techniques, and trained psychodynamic therapists must be available for consultation.
G. Individualized Approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The precise content and nature of psychodynamic psychotherapy should be individualized for each client. 2. Clinical judgment should be exercised in determining the capabilities and personal interests of a given client for the purpose of obtaining a mutually agreed upon treatment course. 3. Effective feedback, support and education should be used to give the client knowledge of the level of functioning, the type of life changes that may be necessary, and the expected results of psychotherapy. 4. The client's support systems (family/culture) should be integrated into psychodynamic psychotherapeutic interventions with the client's consent. 5. The meaning to the client of the therapeutic relationships should be recognized and should inform treatment. 6. Termination of therapy with a given therapist must be appropriately managed and must take into account the meaning that the relationship has for the client.
H. Informed consent	Individuals providing psychotherapy must obtain informed consent and adhere to all applicable ethical and legal requirements consistent with best professional practice.
I. Monitoring	The response of the patient to psychodynamic psychotherapy and the nature of the therapeutic alliance should be continuously assessed during treatment.
J. Supervision	All clinicians providing psychodynamic psychotherapy must have access to ongoing clinical supervision/consultation.
K. Privacy	Appropriate degrees of privacy must be ensured for psychodynamic psychotherapy.

L. Documentation

Psychodynamic psychotherapy should be documented in the clinical record, describing the content of the interaction and the patient's response.

M. Contraindications

The use of Dynamic techniques is contraindicated in:

1. Unstable psychosis,
2. Ongoing significant substance abuse,
3. Severe cognitive disability,
4. Dementia, and
5. Delirium.